

❖ Superfund Asbestos Site

❖ Lincoln County, Montana

❖ 1990-1991



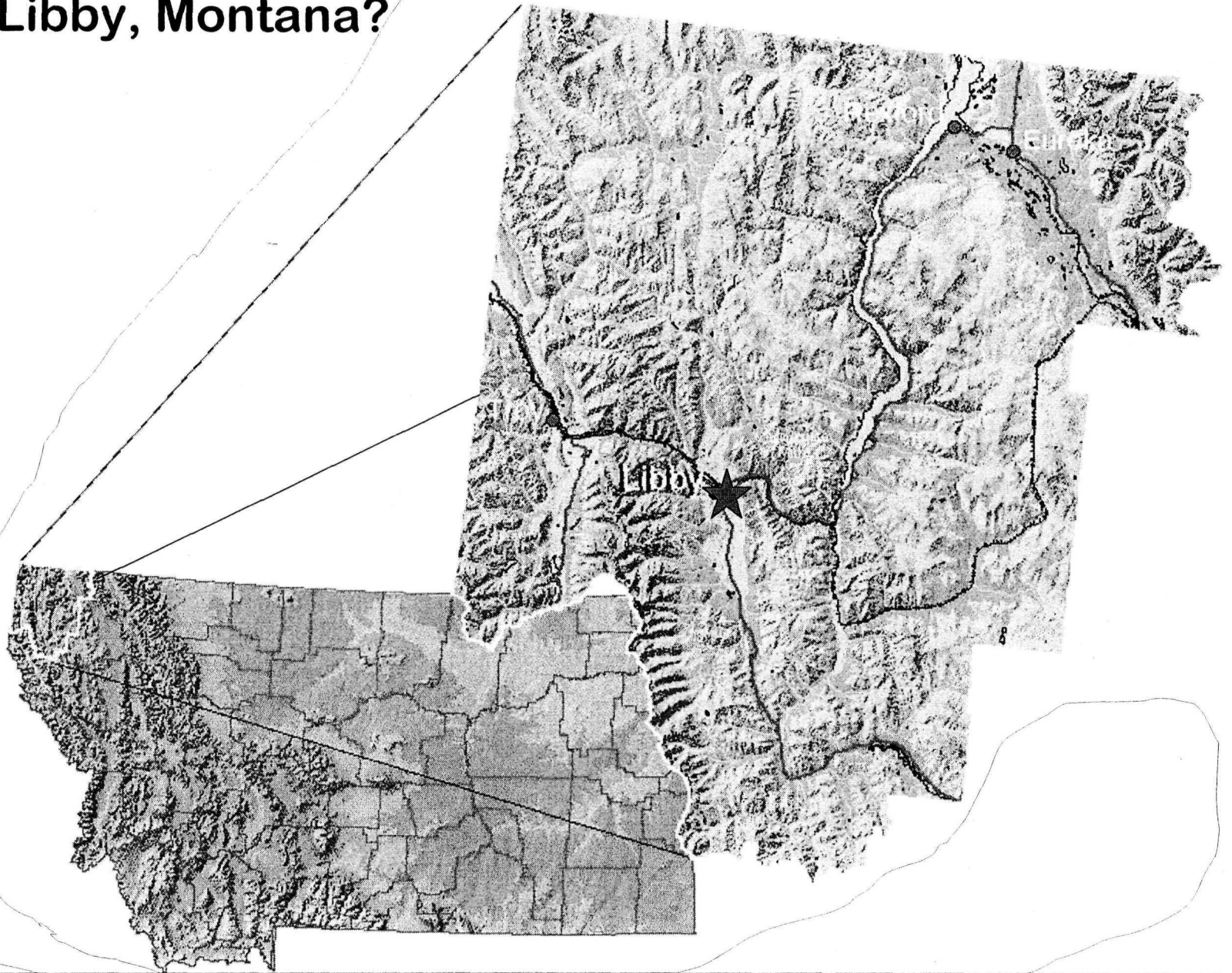
1075507 - R8 SDMS



LIBBY,
MONTANA

- ❖ Superfund Asbestos Site
- ❖ Lincoln County, NW Montana
- ❖ Emergency Response Cleanup

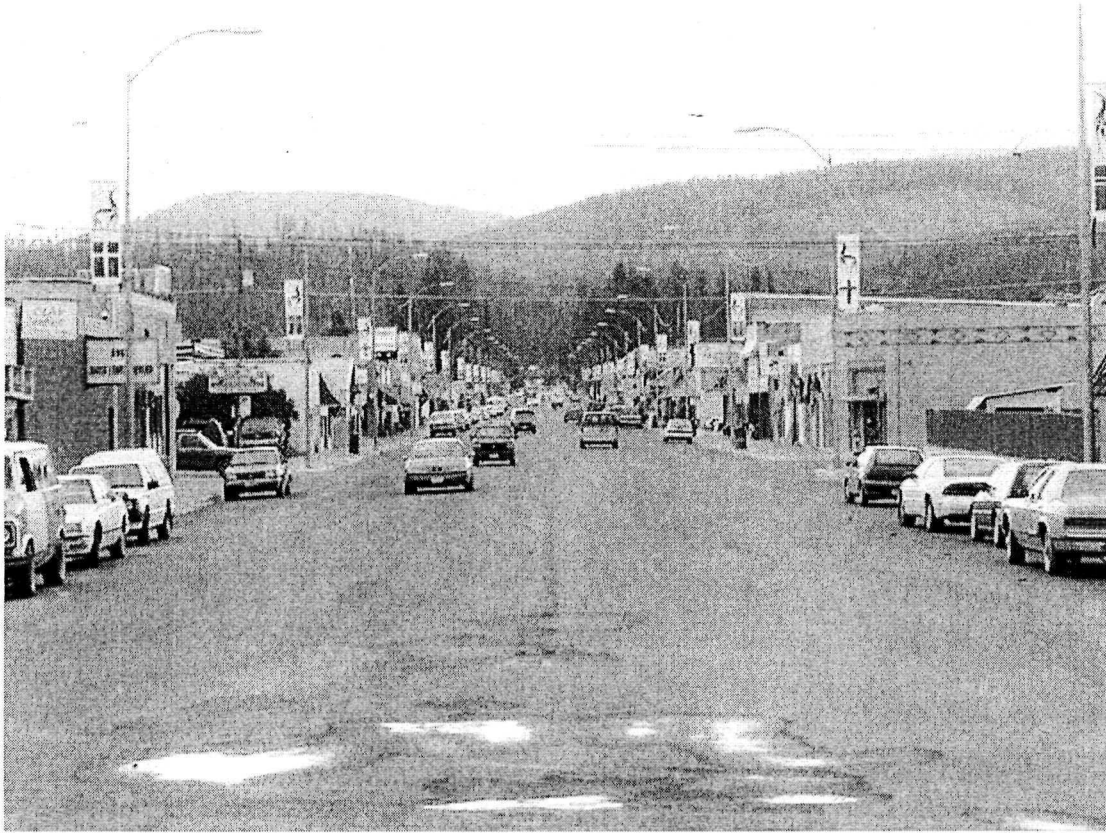
Where is Libby, Montana?



Overview Points

- ❖ Largest, most pervasive public health impacts in Superfund history
- ❖ Libby vermiculite contaminated with toxic form of asbestos
 - ❖ Vermiculite and waste rock used in Libby primarily as insulation, soil additive, and fill material
 - ❖ Asbestos-laden material found throughout Libby area
- ❖ Major economic disruption
 - ❖ WR Grace vermiculite operation closed 1990
 - ❖ Stimson Lumber Mill closed 2003
- ❖ Several hundred deaths, more than 1,500 active cases of Asbestos-Related Disease
- ❖ Cleanup job growing bigger, more difficult than original estimates
 - ❖ 6+ years to finish current work in Libby
 - ❖ First Libby, then Troy, Montana (smaller, nearby impacted community.)
- ❖ EPA achieving steady progress
 - ❖ More than 217 properties cleaned up.
 - ❖ Community concerns about work pace, long term health support, economic revitalization.

Libby at a Glance



Mineral Ave, downtown Libby

History

- ❖ Vermiculite company town
- ❖ W.R. Grace gave away asbestos-contaminated material
- ❖ State Top Priority NPL Site

Today

- ❖ 10,000+ residents
- ❖ 4,300+ properties
 - ❖ 1,200+ contaminated
- ❖ Stigma of widespread contamination and Superfund
- ❖ Struggling economy

The Libby Vermiculite Mine

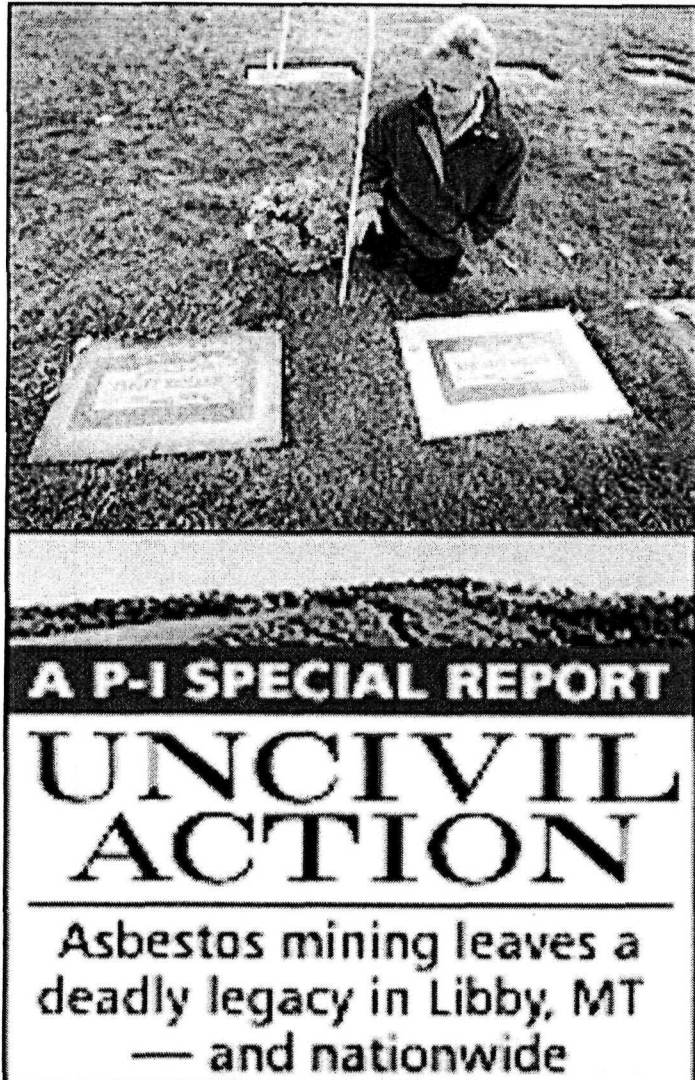


Libby Amphibole Asbestos

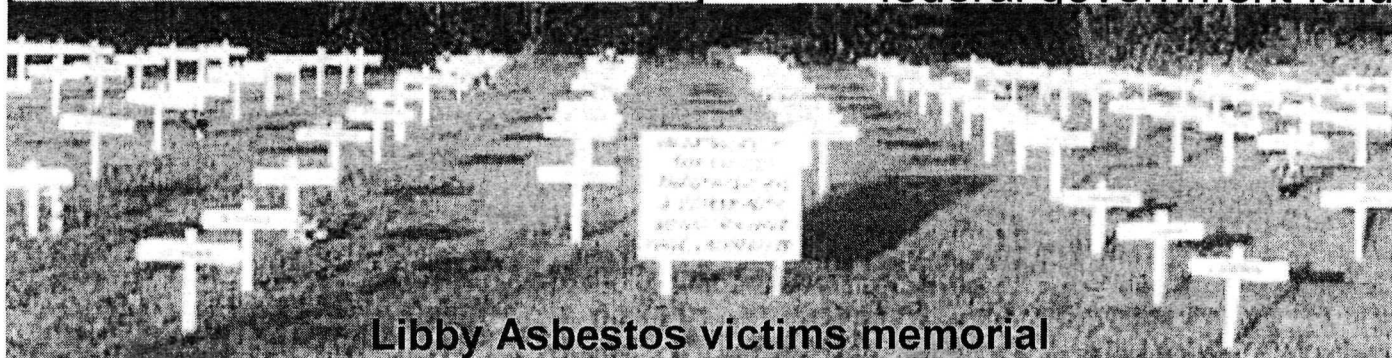


- ❖ Large amount and high concentration of material which easily breaks down into dangerous fibers.
- ❖ Impossible to separate from the Libby vermiculite ore.
- ❖ Many residents used these rocks and boulders as decorative landscaping.
- ❖ Health data indicate this may be a very different, highly toxic form of asbestos.

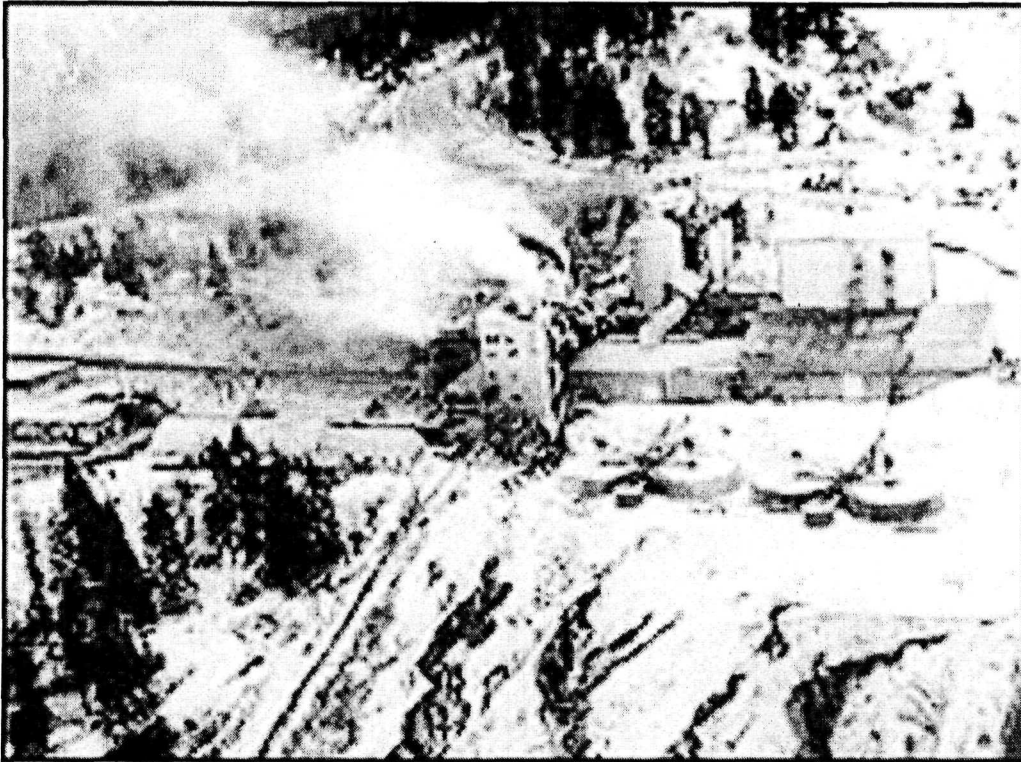
Seattle Post-Intelligencer



- ❖ Broke the story in Nov. 1999
 - ❖ High rates of illness and death in Libby
- ❖ Region 8 emergency response
 - ❖ Assessment and clean up
 - ❖ Health investigations by HHS (Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry)
- ❖ Most severe public health impacts in the history of Superfund
 - ❖ Workers, families and residents are sick
- ❖ Lingering perception of betrayal
 - ❖ Citizen concerns over union, local state and federal government failure to act



Libby Asbestos victims memorial



HHS (ATSDR) Libby Mortality Study 1979 - 1998

Libby Ore Processing Plant (portion became Raintree Nursery)

- ❖ Asbestosis deaths occur at 40 times state, 80 times US average.
- ❖ Lung cancer deaths > 1.2 times above average.
- ❖ Mesothelioma (asbestos-related) cancer deaths very elevated.
- ❖ Majority of deaths linked to workplace exposures.

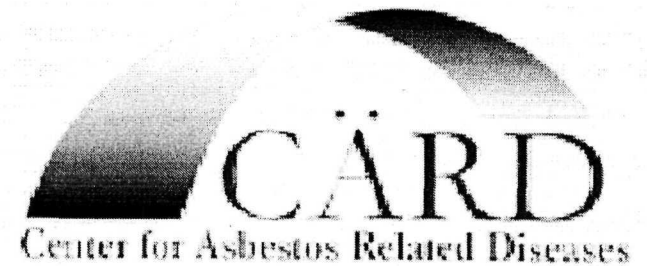
ATSDR Libby Health Study 2000 – 2001

- ❖ Evaluated 7,000+ Libby valley residents
- ❖ Found that almost 20% have lung abnormalities today
- ❖ Identified 16 different asbestos exposure pathways related to ore
- ❖ 3 pathways most highly linked to illness:
 - ❖ Workers
 - ❖ Families of workers (“take-home” exposure, dust on clothing)
 - ❖ Children playing in waste piles
- ❖ People reporting more exposure pathways are more likely to be sick.

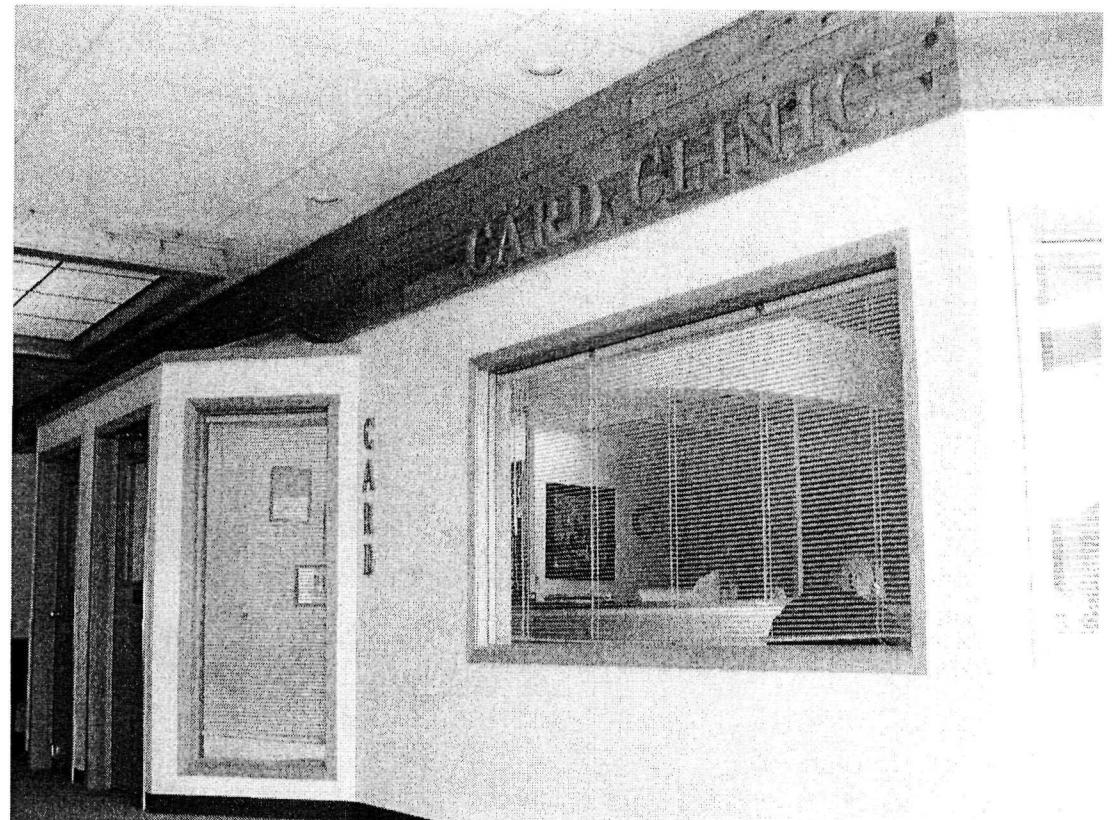


Children playing in a vermiculite waste rock pile. Note sign advertising waste “give-away.”

Public Health Support



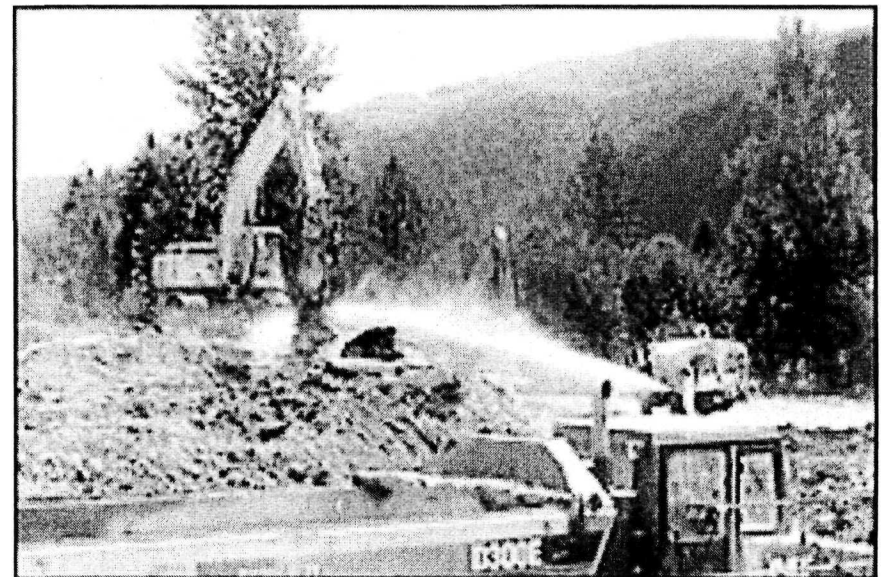
- ❖ HHS grant to St. Luke's Community Hospital
- ❖ Dr. Brad Black and the CARD Clinic
 - ❖ Currently treating > 1,500 local patients for ARD



What Has EPA Done?

INDUSTRIAL CLEANUP

- ❖ Mine Road
- ❖ Disposal Operations
- ❖ Screening Plant
 - ❖ 17 acres and 250,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil
- ❖ Export (Shipping) Plant
 - ❖ 20,000 cubic yards cleaned up in downtown Libby
- ❖ Raintree Nursery
 - ❖ 6 acre portion of former processor site.





High School track during clean up



High School track after clean up

More Completed Cleanup Projects

- ❖ Elementary, Middle and High School Playgrounds
 - ❖ Tracks
 - ❖ Ballfields
 - ❖ Facilities
- ❖ Community Boat Ramp
- ❖ Municipal Buildings
- ❖ 217 properties cleaned up (May 7, 2004)
- ❖ 400 property design plans
- ❖ EPA targeted the highest exposures/threats first

WHAT'S NEXT?

PROPERTIES AND HOMES

- ❖ 1,200 or more to go, mostly residences
- ❖ Current rate is 130 - 200 per year

REDEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS

- ❖ Ongoing effort to bring work and businesses to Libby



Removing contaminated insulation

Enforcement

- ❖ W.R. Grace is the sole Responsible Party
 - ❖ Grace has contested the cleanup with EPA and community
 - ❖ Grace currently in bankruptcy (court limiting Grace to cleanups at Grace-owned properties.)
 - ❖ Community distrusts Grace.
 - ❖ Grace may conduct future cleanup at the mine.
- ❖ EPA awarded largest ever (\$55M+) award for response costs.
 - ❖ Pending bankruptcy resolution
 - ❖ Appeal pending before 9th Circuit
 - ❖ EPA and DOJ expect court to sustain the award.



REDEVELOPMENT

- ❖ SEVERE ECONOMIC SLUMP

- ❖ Highest unemployment rate in the State

- ❖ EPA assisting local efforts

- ❖ Redevelopment of former Stimson Lumber Mill Site

- ❖ Cleanup 2004

- ❖ Town feels EPA is not doing enough, and taking too long

- ❖ Perception that redevelopment assistance comes at the cost of clean up

- ❖ Tourism and other business impacts

